



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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TEXAS LEADS NATION IN HUNTERS; FLORIDA, CALIFORNIA IN ANGLERS, PRELIMINARY NATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS SHOW

Texas leads the Nation with more than 1 million sport hunters while Florida and California tie for the lead in anglers, each with more than 2.6 million, according to preliminary state-by-state results of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey on outdoor recreation.

California easily has the largest number of people -- 6.5 million -- who enjoy wildlife-related activities such as feeding, observing, or photographing wildlife. These are among the initial findings of the 1991 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

"The survey reflects how many Americans join me in loving outdoor wildlife recreation," said Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. "It shows wildlife resources are a vital part of our national lifestyle, and make a major contribution to the health of our economy."

The survey is the most extensive periodic examination of the participation of U.S. residents in wildlife recreation and is conducted every five years. The information is used widely by public and private wildlife managers and others to help meet the changing demands on fish and wildlife resources.

The state-by-state results add more detail to preliminary national results released last fall. The national results show over 100 million Americans 16 years and older enjoy some activity relating to fish and wildlife. A total of 40 million people fish or hunt, and 76 million people participate in nonconsumptive activities.

The annual economic value of wildlife-related recreation is about \$58 billion, or about 1 percent of America's gross national product.

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Alaska boasts the highest percentage of residents who fish, 38 percent, while Montana has the highest percentage of residents who hunt, 26 percent.

The West North Central region, including Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota, has the highest percentage of residents who participate in non-consumptive activities -- 52 percent. That region also leads the Nation in the percentage of residents who fish, 27 percent, and hunt, 13 percent.

The U.S. Bureau of Census interviewed 128,000 households in the United States to determine participants in wildlife-associated activities. From this initial phase, 68,000 individuals were selected to be interviewed primarily by telephone three times at four-month intervals during 1991.

Previous surveys only interviewed participants once during the survey year. The methodology was changed for the current survey in order to improve the accuracy of the data.

The change was made because people recall detailed information concerning expenditures and days of activity more accurately when interviewed more frequently. Information contained in the 1991 Survey is not directly comparable to past surveys which had longer recall periods. The Service's final report will take the change in methodology into account to identify trends in participation and expenditures from previous surveys.

The last National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation was in 1985. As expected, the 1991 estimates of participation are lower than those of the 1985 Survey. This is not indicative of an actual decline, but rather the result of the changes in methodology. Other information sources, such as a fishing and hunting license purchases and excise taxes on industry sales, indicate a relatively steady level of participation in fishing and hunting nationwide since 1985.

The 1991 Survey was paid for through excise taxes on sporting arms, ammunition, fishing equipment, pleasure boats, and motorboat fuels under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration and Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Acts.

The final national report is expected to be available in May 1993 with individual state reports available four to six months later.